1: Fitzgerald H-S (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

755 of curing lesser ailments with drugs and herbs which have real medicinal value, but many of their specifics are compounded of ingredients chosen for reasons more magical than medical, and if they have a curative effect, it must be attributed to the faith of the patient. Although the climate of Ta Li is healthy, being dry and free from malaria, the lack of a public health service permits infectious disease a
761 free run until the epidemic has spent its force. Consequently few families are free from sickness in the course of the year, and deaths are always to be expected. Inevitably the people, being accustomed to this prospect, are less affected by the untimely death of a relative than peoples who have come to expect long life as the natural thing and regard early decease as a tragic accident. The Min Chia adult of riper years always has his coffin bought and ready, and death when it comes is met with the accustomed preparations without greatly disorganising the life of the household.

764 The funeral is arranged for the first lucky day, determined by consulting the calendar in general use, in which
[292 such days are marked. The whole family at once puts on
765] mourning, the white costume, from headcloth to shoes, which is traditional with the Chinese, and adopted, like most of the funeral rites, by the Min Chia. This costume is worn until after the funeral, and the headcloth and shoes are retained for one month after the death. Until after the funeral the family avoid sitting on chairs or benches, using only low stools close to the ground, and eat only off a low table, as a sign of grief and humility. The musicians, who should in fact be Buddhist priests, but usually in Ta Li are really laymen, are called in to chant sutras before the coffin, which is placed in the main guest hall in front of the altar of the ancestors. Here it remains for at least one day, or until the earliest auspicious day for the funeral, which will

5:Graham E-5 (1933, 1941)1942 AE3 Sino-Tibetan
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times forty days. Later the mother's relatives are invited to a 844
feast and the child is given a name.

When the child is forty days old it is taken to the sacred grove 851
and there is a ceremony which is performed by the priest or *bi bu*.

5. Sickness.

Among the Ch'iang disease is one of the most deadly enemies. 164
for the people know little about the principles of health and sanita- 751
tion. On the first story of the homes are the latrines and the 759
domestic animals, and there are few if any windows excepting those opening into the small front courtyard. The unsavory air and smells constantly rise into the living-rooms above. The air is smoky and the windows small. The habit of spitting on the floor means that the floor is covered with germs. In addition there is the night-soil of the dogs, cats, chickens and sometimes goats. Children playing on the floor get the germs on their fingers and then into their mouths. Sweeping stirs the dust and it is breathed into people's lungs. Fleas, flies, lice, and bedbugs spread disease. Smoke causes eye-troubles, and colds in winter-time sometimes turn into pneumonia. Epidemics of measles, smallpox, typhoid and other diseases spread through the villages. Sickness is so common that a foreign visitor is constantly appealed to for medicine.

The people often use medicine, but they frequently misuse it and it often causes death. Some of the practitioners who call themselves doctors are worse than useless. A Ch'iang friend told the writer that his daughter had a discharge in one of her ears. He called a local doctor who washed out the ear by squirting cold unboiled water into it. The child died next day with severe pains in her head.

It is believed that all diseases are caused by demons, so when 753
people become ill they often call the priest to exorcise the demon that is causing the disease.

6. Death and Burial.

As soon as it is known that a person is dead, there is weeping 764
with tears. The newest and best clothing of the deceased is put on, and the corpse is placed in a wooden coffin. For two or three days it is left in the home, after which it is carried out and buried or cremated. A priest performs the ceremony of opening the way.

Formerly cremation was the one way of burial, but in recent 761
years burial in graves has become customary in villages where 177